

A Tribute to Truffaut

# Video

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FEBRUARY 1985

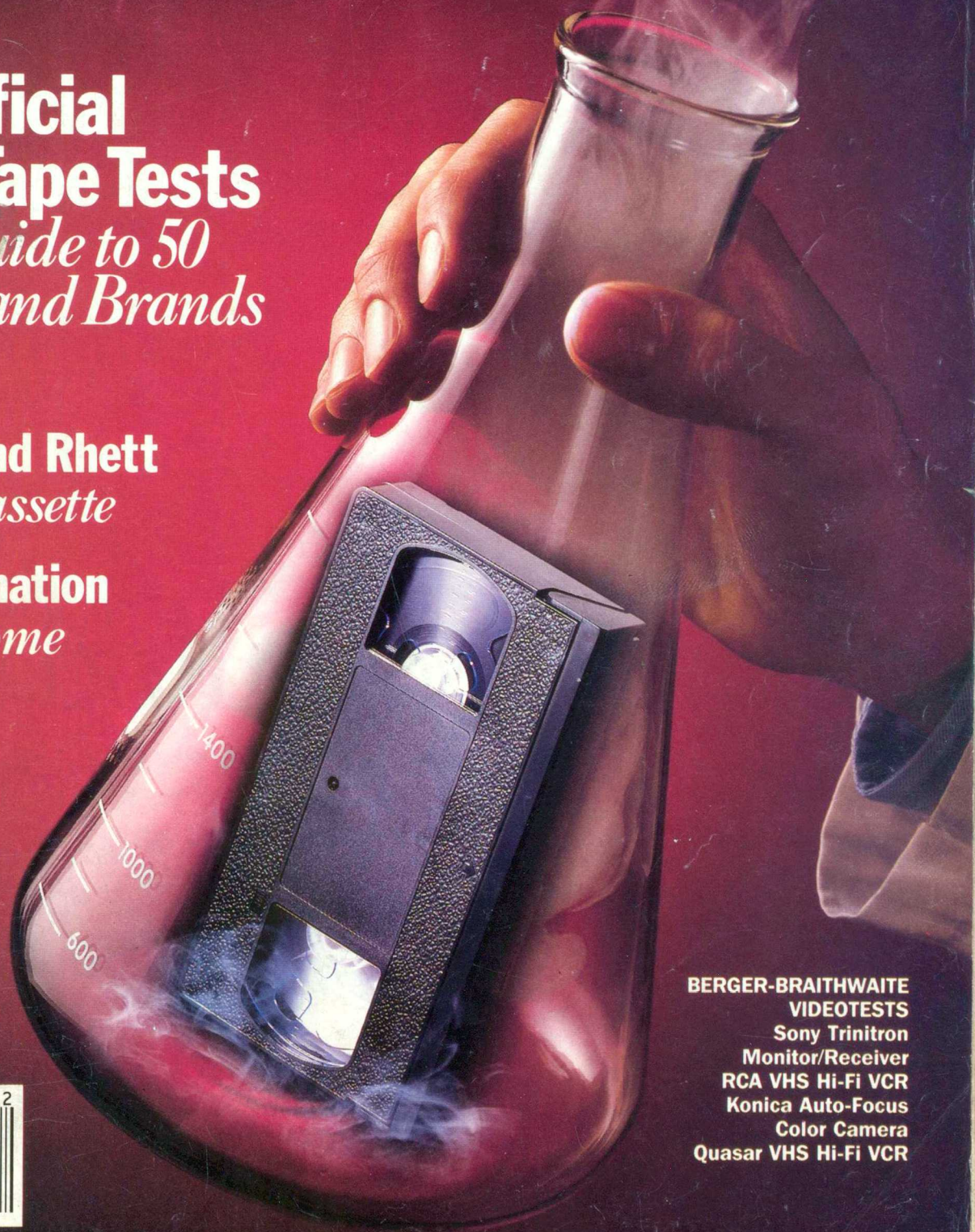
The #1 Magazine of Home Video

Interference  
*Cure Your TV Ills*

## Our Official Blank Tape Tests *VHS Guide to 50 Grades and Brands*

Carlett and Rhett  
*Love on Cassette*

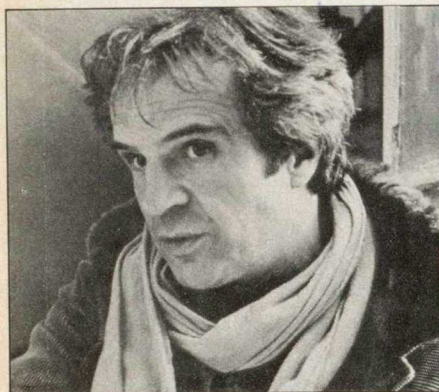
Video Animation  
*No limit Home*



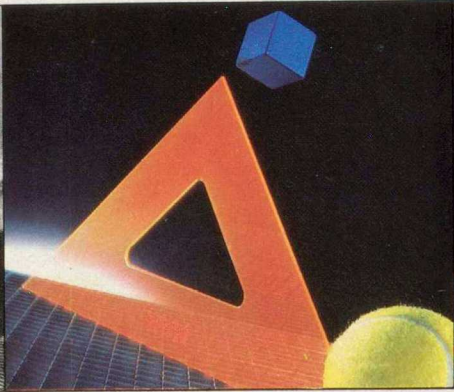
BERGER-BRAITHWAITE  
VIDEOTESTS  
Sony Trinitron  
Monitor/Receiver  
RCA VHS Hi-Fi VCR  
Konica Auto-Focus  
Color Camera  
Quasar VHS Hi-Fi VCR



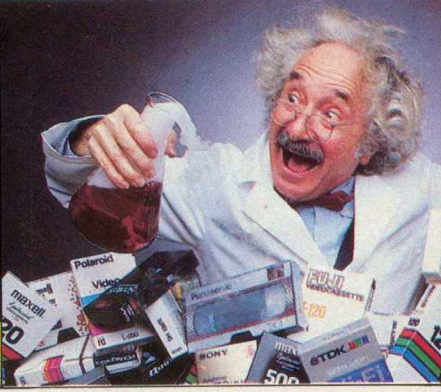




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A unique achievement in motion-picture history becomes video's hottest (and longest-awaited) title.

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And we don't mean the movie. What do you do when images start multiplying like rabbits?

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Walt Disney you ain't, but you too can bring still objects to motion-picture life; here's how.

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### The Official Video Magazine Blank Tape Tests: Part I

This is it—the project our Technical Editor has nursed to fruition over two long years. This first installment, covering VHS only, tells all you need to know about how videotape is made, how we're rating it, and how to find just the right tape for your own needs. Next month: Beta.

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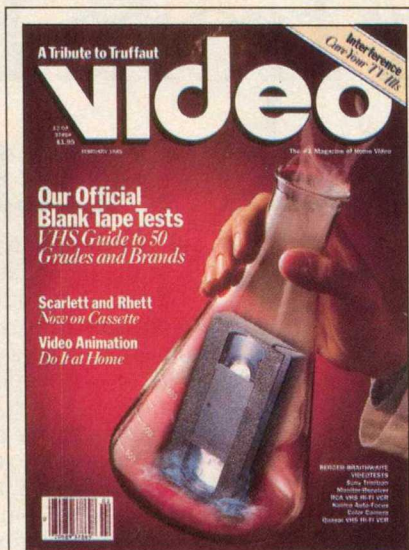
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**About the Cover.** Bubble, bubble; toil and trouble—two years' worth, to be exact. But our tape tests are here. Photo by Walter Wick.

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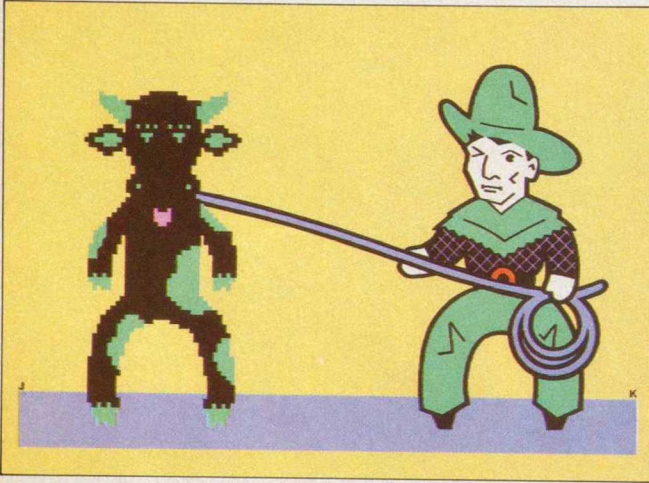




# Random Access

Personal Computers, News, and Games

Illustrations by Julia King



## Graphic E-Mail

Silicon cowboy Dave Hughes Sr. is beating AT&T and a host of other well-heeled corporate and government players at the high-stakes game of videotex. Along with partner Louis Jaffe, he has just created the first telephone-accessible electronic bulletin board for personal computers. And it's able to swap or publish full-color images as well as text. Using the standardized graphics presentation code favored by American Telephone and Telegraph—the infamous NAPLPS (North American Presentation Level Protocol Standard)—Hughes' Colorado Springs-based firm, Chariot Communications, offers 16-color medium-resolution images with animation and commercials just a phone call away at a modest fee of under \$4 per hour (phone connect-time charges extra).

"Anyone with a Commodore 64, Apple, or IBM and a modem can send and receive color images from us over the phone," explains Hughes. "We are the originators of graphic electronic mail." His first business client is a local architecture firm that instantaneously

transmits updated floor plans to building sites in Kansas City and San Diego. Hughes is also intent on attracting home graphics/information suppliers. "We don't agree with AT&T and Knight-Ridder and European governments that videotex is something home users should spend money to view as they do cable TV with a special decoder. Ours is an interactive system that encourages home-computer users with easily available software to create and publish a new form of illustrated electronic literature. The one drawback is that decoding/encoding software has been slow in coming to market." Hughes' plans include selling and distributing such programs over the phone, becoming the biggest publisher of NAPLPS software. "If you want to create full-resolution images to transmit, you still need a machine like a Mindset or a modified IBM PC," he cautions.

Hughes is far from your venture-capital-driven computer entrepreneur. He is a retired Army officer, West Point graduate, pioneer personal computer telecommunicator, and original on-line publisher—proclaimed by one

writer as "the Network Nation's poet laureate." With his penchant for Western garb and an avocation for Old West ghost towns, Hughes is the first Silicon Cowboy. From his own Old Colorado City Electronic Cottage (run on a vintage Radio Shack TRS-80 computer or portable Model 100), as well as on commercial computer-information services like the Source and CompuServe, he rides the personal micro range, sticking up for the settlers on this electronic frontier. Among his accomplishments: reversing a planned local zoning ordinance that would've banned homebased businesses (including his electronic bulletin board), by posting the word on his bulletin board and capturing the attention of Colorado Springs media and politicians.

Hughes is a devotee of what he calls the "word dance"—the kinetic display of text that dances across the personal computer monitor when telecommunicating. In January 1984, AT&T's proprietary system of sending images over phone lines and the Canadian-sanctioned Teldin standard were merged into NAPLPS (the technical specs run over 180 pages) to provide the first agreed-upon code for electronic graphics. (Sending electronic text via the much-used ASCII code had been standardized since the 1930s.) Hughes saw this new standard as a chance to extend the word dance from simple text to colored images: "We wanted to go beyond electronic mail and computer conferencing, to open up the illustrated page to computer users. We want to bring videotex to the people."

—Steve Ditlea

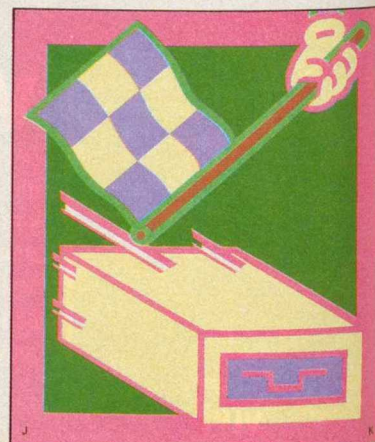
## Speeding Up Disk Drives

Anyone who's used the Commodore 64 knows it's a best buy: lots of power for the money and software galore. But you'll also be told about its worst feature: the Commodore disk drive is *s-l-o-w*.

Well, somebody at Data-most was on the ball. The company's newest program, *Kwik Load*, claims to speed up the lazy Commodore drive by 300 percent. The program is short (less than 1K bytes long) and cheap (about \$20).

The good news is that it's all true. *Kwik Load* just about cures the problem, and in fact I find some programs load almost six times faster. Saving files and programs to disk is sped up as well. The only caveat is that *Kwik Load* will not work with much commercial software that uses elaborate copy-protection schemes.

As a bonus, an extremely handy disk utility is included on the *Kwik Load* disk. *Kwik Copy* lets you copy a complete disk in less than four minutes and performs disk operations many times faster. Formatting a disk without the program, for example, normally takes almost two minutes. *Kwik Copy* does it in





15 seconds.

How does Datamost do it? The firm is not saying, but you may learn about it in its new book, *Inside Commodore Dos* (\$19.95) by Dr. Richard Immers and Dr. Gerald Neufeld. The authors completely demystify the complicated Commodore drives, and a diskette containing dozens of disk utility programs from the book is also available for an additional \$15.95.

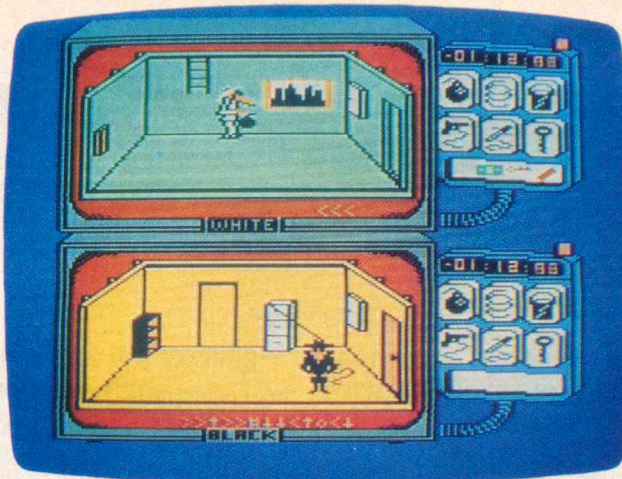
Finally, Datamost—previously known as a game company—built its secret disk-speedup into a new series of productivity programs including a word processor, database, and spread sheet. Like *Kwik Load*, each will be priced at less than \$20. —Tim Onosko

## Spy vs. Spy

(First Star/C-64, Apple, Atari/disk)

Since the licensing bug first bit electronic-game producers a few years back, no one has more successfully captured the original feel of the source nor offered a more satisfying result than First Star's *Spy vs. Spy*. Based on the long-running Prohias comic strip from *MAD Magazine*, in which a pair of '50s-style secret agents (complete with slouch-brim hats and trench coats) wordlessly compete to do one another in, *Spy* has been magically transformed by designer Mike Riedel into a rousing action-strategy contest.

Dual "windows" allow both spies to be moved and viewed independently over a series of increasingly complex floor plans, setting and springing traps while busily hiding and uncovering passports, money, secret documents, and all that other espionage stuff. Entirely joystick-driven, each window is accompanied by what First Star has dubbed a "trap-u-lator" or on-screen icon selector. The joystick either maneuvers the player's spy or selects an icon from the trap-u-lator, including five traps and an overview of the floor plan. When the two spies come together in the same room, the software switches to a combat mode and arms each agent with a



club for a good old-fashioned brawl. The object of the game is to collect the assorted spy goodies and bolt for the airfield where a small plane is waiting to whisk your surrogate back to his motherland.

The graphics here are excellent, as befits a game so rooted in a visual medium. The spies look *great*, and so do the details: a spy springing an electrocution trap becomes partly transparent, exposing his skeleton, and once he's slain he grows angel's wings and soars skyward. Such things ought to keep players amused for weeks.

—Bill Kunkel

## Championship Boxing

Sierra/PCjr

It's the dream come true of every fight fan who ever drew breath. Imagine a full-graphics computer simulation that lets players match virtually any two of the greatest fighters who ever lived (all the heavyweight champs and many of the significant pugilists from the lighter divisions). Howard Cosell himself would be speechless. The program is *Championship Boxing* from Sierra, for the PCjr, and this one has it *all*. Go to the gym and play around with the stats of the boxers or explore the options and alter the reality—better still, create your very own Rocky.

*Championship Boxing* offers the player three alternatives. Two fighters can be selected and the computer will manage them both. You just sit back and watch. In

the manager option, playing either against the computer or another coach, an option is selected before each round ("Punch to head," "Work on body," etc.). As time goes on the options expand or diminish depending on how it goes in the squared circle. If your man is cut, you may only be able to close the cut and not give any instructions! While the fight is on, managers can issue only two commands: cover up and go-for-

the-KO. (In the arcade version the gamer can control every movement of his fighter using preassigned keys. This option is only for those who are really coordinated.)

Boxing fans will not believe this simulation. The graphics are superb; sound cues are used to indicate blows landed and deflected. Score on the rounds basis or the ten-point-must system. In fact, considering some of the bouts I've seen lately, I find myself preferring simulated action to the real thing. I mean, where else can Jack Johnson fight Joe Louis, with Marciano and Ali waiting in the wings?

—Bill Kunkel

## Breaking

Just when you thought you'd heard more than you ever cared to hear about breakdancing (yep, the instructional videocassette has been around awhile), Creative Software announced a disk-based program for the Commodore 64. *Break Street* is a game program and costs \$24.95. Not reviewed by us.

## BEST SELLERS/HOME

1. **Dollars & Sense.** TIP, MAC, APc, IBM, AP. Monogram.
2. **Print Shop.** AP. Broderbund.
3. **Bank Street Writer.** AP, APc, IBM, C64, AT. Broderbund.
4. **Managing Your Money.** IBM. Micro Education (MECA).
5. **Home Acct.** APc, TIP, EPS, AT, C64, IBM, TRS, AP. Arrays/Cont.
6. **Mac the Knife (Fonts).** MAC. Miles Computing.
7. **ClickArt Publications.** MAC. T/Maker.
8. **Mac the Knife.** MAC. Miles Computing.
9. **Dazzle Draw.** APc. Broderbund.
10. **Print Shop Graphics Library.** AP. Broderbund.

## BEST SELLERS/RECREATION

1. **Flight Simulator II.** AT, C64, AP. Sublogic.
2. **Flight Simulator.** IBM. Microsoft.
3. **Sargon III.** AP, C64, IBM, MAC. Hayden Software.
4. **Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.** MAC, AP. Infocom.
5. **Zork I.** CP/M, AP, DEC, IBM, AT, MAC, TIP. Infocom.
6. **Lode Runner.** AT, C64, IBM, AP. Broderbund.
7. **Championship Lode Runner.** AP, C64. Broderbund.
8. **Millionaire.** MAC, AP, C64, IBM, AT. Bluechip Software.
9. **Trivia Fever.** C64, AP, IBM, AT. Professional Software.
10. **Wizardry.** IBM, AP. Sir-Tech Software.

LEGEND: AP=Apple, APc=Apple IIc, APe=Apple IIe, AT=Atari, C64=Commodore 64, COM=Commodore Pet/CBM, CP/M=5 1/4" and 8" formats, DEC=DEC Rainbow, EPS=Epson QX-10, IBM=IBM-PC, MAC=Apple Macintosh, PCjr=IBM PCjr, RIP=Texas Instruments Professional, TRS=TRS-80, VIC=Commodore Vic-20, VTR=Victor 9000, WNG=Wang Personal Computer, ZEN=Zenith 100.

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